

(X) Required

() Local

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DISTRICTWIDE AND STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of offering access and appropriate testing accommodations to eligible students so that they can participate in assessment programs on an equal basis with their nondisabled peers. Two elements that contribute to an effective assessment program are proper use of use of accommodations and use of universal design principles in developing and administering assessments.

Assessment Accommodations

Assessment accommodations provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to:

- Participate in the instructional and assessment program;
- Demonstrate their strengths, knowledge and skills
- Provide an accurate measure of the standards being assessed so that appropriate instruction and services can be provided.

Assessment accommodations are changes made in the administration of the test in order to remove obstacles to the test-taking process that are presented by the disability without changing the constructs being assessed. Examples of assessment accommodations are: flexibility in scheduling/timing; flexibility in the setting for the administration of the assessment; changes in the method of presentation and changes in the method of response. Assessment accommodations are neither intended nor permitted to: alter the construct being measured or invalidate the results, provide an unfair advantage for students with disabilities over students taking the test under standard conditions or substitute for knowledge or abilities that the student has not attained.

The Committee on Special Education, the Subcommittee on Special Education or the Committee on Preschool Special Education is responsible for recommending the appropriate assessment accommodations and including those recommendations on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individualized Education Services Program (IESP) or Service Plan (SP). If it is determined that a student should participate in alternative assessments instead of the standard statewide or districtwide assessments, the CSE must indicate the reasons for doing so on the IEP, IESP or SP. The Building 504 Committee will include the appropriate test accommodations as part the 504 plan.

The recommendations will be reviewed annually by the CSE, CSE subcommittee, CPSE or 504 team. The Board acknowledges the importance of integrating the assessment program with the instructional program and, to that end, encourages effective communication among district staff so that implementation is consistent and fair. The goal is to provide effective assessments that allow students to benefit from their educational program.

In some situations, a building principal may authorize the use of testing accommodations in accordance with this policy. Those instances are limited to cases where a regular education student incurs a disability, such as, but not limited to, a broken arm, without sufficient time for the CSE, CPSE and/or Section 504 Committee to make a recommendation prior to a test. They do not include cases where the student is already being evaluated to determine his or her eligibility for status as a student with a disability. In exercising this authority, the building principal will rely on his or her professional judgment. He or she also may confer with CSE, CPSE and/or Section 504 Committee members.

Universal Design Principles in Districtwide Assessments

The Board of Education recognizes the benefits of using the principles of universal design to further the goal of ensuring equal access to districtwide assessments and to ensure the most accurate measure of the performance of all students. The Board directs the Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate school staff, to examine how universal design principles can be incorporated into the district's assessment program, and to facilitate its use to the extent feasible. Any steps taken in this regard will be consistent with this policy and applicable State Education Department policy and/or guidance on the use of universal design principles.

Ref: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 USC §§1401(35); 1412(a)(16)(E);
34 CFR §§ 300.44
Assistive Technology Act, 29 USC 3002(19)
8 NYCRR §§ 200.1(jjj); 200.2(b)(13,14); 200.4(d)(2)(vi)

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